Dear Sinologists, 4/19/74

This is a professional consultation. No less!

Yesterday was Lil's birthday. We went to dinner at Mr. Maio's. As usual, the dinner itself was a delight.

We had no sooner been seated than he came over with a friendly greeting and the message, phrased is suitable and I suppose traditional elaborateness, that he had a birthday gift for Lil. He then returned with two beautiful Chinese dolls, standing dolls, on a sort of pedestal base. Lil has not yet removed the plastic protection from them so I haven't seen them clearly. They seem to be of the most careful workmanship. What I take to be the traditional dress is a perfect fit of delicate clothing fashioned as neatly as actual clothing rarely is. One of the dolls is holding and in the position of playing an instrument somewhat like a mandolin. The other seems to be heolding a red rod of some kind and what I take to be a pocketbook.

They are really quite attractive. And they are by no means cheap stuff.

We wondered if he sell things like this but while he has places to display them he does not.

Our question is not over the fact of the gift. Rather is it is there any significance hidden to us bignoses in it.

He and his family are fine people. We like them. Lil sees him often because increasingly he turns his problems over to her and she is happy to cope for him. Today, for example, she will straighten out some insurance matters he can't understand. So, we know he appreciates what she does for him.

We also know, although it is never discussed, that he has to realize that every bignose he has dealt with up to Lil has gypped him. Layers, CPSs, everybody. Gradually she is getting his troubled affairs in order.And decent person would appreciate this, and I suppose a Chinese more than most, particularly because there is no charge for each of these time-consuming services. She does all his work for a nominal Block fee. (The odd thing is that he was seeking her out because of something he had been told about her but because of communication difficulties he became a Block account, not her personal account.) And I hope I have startedhim on the straightening out of costly and painful immigration matters that Lil asked me to attack. The coming of his brother-in-law and an old friend from Taiwan have been delayed. Monday he will see the Senator's immigration specialist.

Because hehas made his trust and appreciation clear, we found ourselves wondering if there could be any significance in his gift. He knew it was Lil's birthday.

While with him free services have been carried to an extreme, in this particular Block franchise, possibly because of the people involved, they are not unknown. Lil and another woman, the two best, spent all day yesterday trying to straighten out the affairs of a well-paid engineer who has spent most of his time working overseas, which means special exemptions, for a total charge of $25.00 that in my presence Lil fixed with the other consultant's agreement. Lil was helping the other woman, whose case it was. Now from this small fee, the owner of the franchise, the Block corporation and both consultants have to get they pay, so for each the slice is thin. But someone down the line had messed it up, so they felt sorry for the man, despite hisability to afford what had to be done and the extraordinary exemption given for overseas income.

This made me wonder about the Hunts of the country. If they are assigned overseas, and t is does not mean uninterrupted service, they have an extra exemption of $25,000 a year for three-year service overseas. It begins with 17 months and a day and I think Lil said at that point it is $20,000 exemption.

Those cats are <u>very</u> well paid.